

DISASTER AID POSSIBLE FOR STORM-DAMAGED WELLS AND SEPTIC SYSTEMS

WESTFIELD, Mass. – Homeowners in Berkshire and Franklin counties may be eligible for disaster aid to help repair flood-damaged wells and septic systems, state and federal officials said.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants can help pay to pump septic tanks, perform required repairs or replace the system as needed. Damaged private wells that are the sole source of water for the home also may be repaired or decontaminated.

"We don't want anyone living in a house with contaminated water or raw sewage," said Federal Coordinating Officer James N. Russo. "Applicants for state and federal disaster assistance should let FEMA know they have a private well and septic system."

Home-repair grants are designed to restore the home to a safe, secure and functional condition. Grants are not intended to restore a home to pre-disaster condition and cannot be used for cosmetic repairs or repairs covered by insurance.

If a homeowner is already registered and did not inform the FEMA inspector that they had a private well, or that their septic system was flooded, they may call FEMA's toll-free number, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). The number for those with a hearing or speech disability is (TTY) 1-800-462-7585. Select the help line when prompted.

This information can also be provided to a FEMA specialist at any of the five Disaster Recovery Centers now open.

Individuals also may report this information online at www.disasterassistance.gov or using a smartphone at m.fema.gov.

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